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CANADA AND THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL
OBLIGATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES 1989

A Summary Report of Five Regional Seminars

by Margaret Bourgeault
October 1989

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Introduction

In October 1988, Canada was elected to the United Nations Security Council. The United Nations Association in Canada (UNAC) and the Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security (CIIPS) took the opportunity to develop a series of seminars, across the country, to inform Canadians about the role of the Security Council and the implications of Canada's membership on the Council.

The seminars took place in March and April of 1989. They were held in Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax. The format for each seminar varied according to the combination of speakers and the preferences of the UNAC Branches coordinating the events.

The speakers for the series were United Nations (UN) officials, representatives of the Department of External Affairs and former Canadian ambassadors. The UN officials and former Canadian ambassadors contributed an important historical dimension to the discussions. The former ambassadors were also free to comment on Canadian foreign policy and Canada's performance in the UN. The Canadian diplomats provided valuable insight into Canada's role in the Security Council and the future agenda of the Council.

The following report summarizes the main themes which emerged from the seminar discussions. It is not intended as an exhaustive account. The speakers and participants discussed a wide variety of subjects.

The International Environment

In the past few years, the world has witnessed a striking revitalization in the peacekeeping and peacemaking functions of the United Nations. It played a significant role in the Iran-Iraq ceasefire, the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, the removal of Cuban troops from Angola and the progress towards independence for Namibia. A renewed commitment to multilateralism, particularly by the Soviet Union and latterly and more reluctantly by the United States, is at the heart of the recent successes of the Security Council. The speakers identified several trends which have influenced the attitudes of the major powers and prompted them to use the UN as a forum for conflict resolution.

A. Developments in the Soviet Union

Mr. Spencer stated that the single greatest factor giving the UN a new lease on life is the change in the attitude of the Soviet Union towards the organization. In the past, the Soviets have played a negative role, not only through their use of the veto, but also in helping to prevent solutions. Recently, they have become part of the solution.

The motivation for this change in attitude has been the economic crisis in the Soviet Union. As Mr. Spencer stated, "The whole Soviet economy is constipated and Mr. Gorbachev is desperately seeking ways to get it moving." He explained that the Soviets spend 15-17% of their gross national product (GNP) on national defence. The costs of military hardware are increasing and the USSR has only 50-55% of the GNP of the US. Given the scale of their economy, the load is enormous just to keep up with the West. Furthermore, the socialist states of Angola, Mozambique, Cuba, Vietnam, Cambodia, Afghanistan, South Yemen and Ethiopia all have very depressed economies. They are a drain on the Soviet economy which cannot be sustained. The USSR needs both a quiet world and a less expensive world in order to address its domestic problems.

Mr. Pearson and Mr. Jonah pointed to the experiences of a new generation of leaders as another factor in the changes to Soviet foreign policy. When Mr. Gorbachev came to power, he had limited foreign affairs experience. He was open to ideas which his predecessors were not, because they had based their careers on previous policies. He surrounded himself with individuals who had been influenced by the West -- for example, Mr. Yakovlev who had spent 10 years in Canada observing the Americans and determining that there had to be some changes to Soviet policy. The current leaders also lived through a very tense period during the time Mr. Pearson was in Moscow in 1982-83. He said that some of the Soviets had been really frightened and had believed war was possible. They knew they could not keep up with Star Wars and the new technologies. Mr. Gorbachev acknowledged this situation. Therefore, he began by asking: "What are we going to do?" He looked to the UN as a kind of defence against anarchy, and as a cheaper alternative for resolving international disputes than, for example, the war in Afghanistan. Mr. Pearson stressed that Mr. Gorbachev has not yet won his battle internally. The international community has a role to play in reinforcing his initiatives and encouraging him to continue with his reforms.

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B. The Failure of Unilateralism

The relative ability of a single nation to manage or control a conflict or a crisis has declined. The experiences of the United States in Vietnam, and the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, have been instructive. The superpowers realize they can no longer project their power by military might. They must, therefore, seek alternative methods to secure their interests. This is reflected in the willingness of both the US and the USSR to exercise restraint in their use of the veto.

C. Democratization of the International System

The nation state is no longer the sole actor on the international stage. Terrorist groups, multinational companies, trading blocs and others influence the state of the world as never before. These groups must be taken into consideration and accommodated when solutions are sought to international problems or conflicts.

D. The Emergence of Global Problems

The world is currently facing problems which involve the "Global Commons"--the environment, the world economy, the consequences of the information explosion, the decay in the health of the oceans, and the burden of ever-growing defence expenditures to the detriment of social programmes. The resolution of these security problems requires the political will and cooperation of the international community.

The UN is the sole multilateral forum currently available to address the security problems facing the world's leaders. As Mr. Barton stated, "The Security Council has repeatedly demonstrated over the years that, when supported by great power agreement, it can perform a very valuable function in 'multilateralizing', and thereby making more acceptable, the ensuing arrangements to prevent or stop conflict. The presence of UN military personnel in Afghanistan, in the Middle East, in Cyprus, in Iran and Iraq, and now in Namibia, is testimony to this truism. The lesson we hope that all nations will draw from the current situation is that it is advantageous to them, and that in their own self-interest they should strive for its continuance."

The Functioning of the UN

The cooperation of the superpowers has altered the dynamics of the Security Council. The permanent members are working together as never before. This development is not always regarded with enthusiasm by the non-aligned countries. This was demonstrated in the case of Namibia. The non-aligned countries were united in their position to keep the UN observer force to the 1978 level of seven battalions. The permanent members, who stood to pay the most for the force, wanted to reduce it to three or four battalions. The non-aligned countries could not overturn the decision of the permanent members.

Mr. Jonah remarked that it has been an advantage for the permanent members to have a Secretary-General from a non-aligned country: if he takes a stand in their interests, it is very difficult for the non-aligned countries to go against him. Mr. Jonah recognized the practicality of achieving consensus among the permanent members, but noted that the lack of consultation with the non-permanent and non-aligned members was the disadvantage of such an approach.

The speakers discussed the evolution of the informal mechanisms of the Security Council. In the past, the members of the Security Council would meet informally to discuss the matters before them. The Secretary-General was excluded from these meetings. He would, however, conduct bilateral consultations with the delegations, the various caucuses and the president of the Council. Over the years, the process of informal consultations has become institutionalized. A small chamber has been built next to the Security Council which allows for "consultation as a whole." The Secretary-General presides over the meetings, translation is provided and the discussions are taped.

Mr. Jonah finds this development very disturbing. He grew up with a UN which prided itself on open debate. Now, governments are able to say behind closed doors what they could not be held accountable for in public. In addition, the parties to a conflict are not present at these private meetings, to defend their positions or put forth their views. Mr. Jonah said that the formal Security Council in effect serves as a rubber stamp for the proceedings. He noted that this evolution is of particular concern to the non-aligned countries.

Mr. Green believes that behind-the-scenes consultation is more effective and leads to greater consensus in public. The alternative--empty rhetoric and divisive debate--is unacceptable. The Security Council is elected to work on behalf of the General Assembly. It is impossible to bring all 159 members into a discussion. He did not, therefore, share Mr. Jonah's concern about the evolution of the informal mechanisms of the Security Council.

Mrs. Bali also emphasized the benefits of consultation. She remarked that the President of the Council consults with the members, the members among themselves, the permanent members and the non-aligned within their respective caucuses, and the coordinators of the caucuses with each other. If no agreement or consensus has been reached after such extensive consultation, prior to a public meeting, there is little chance of a successful resolution. Mrs. Bali also pointed out that consultation can defuse a problem, or signal to the president of the Council that he must use alternative methods to solve a problem -- for example, issuing a statement or holding a matter under review for further consultation. These actions have nuances which indicate the type of attention the Council wishes to give to an issue.

There was some discussion about the fact that the informal meetings are taped. Participants queried whether people are generally aware of the tapes, whether they are accessible to all delegations and whether they inhibit the free and open exchange of views sought through informal consultation.

Mr. Green stated that the Canadian government had not been aware of the existence of the tapes until it became a member of the Security Council. He said that many of the delegations do not have the resources to consult the tapes even though they are available. He believes, however, that most members are pragmatists. They would not be surprised about what is said during the informal consultations and they realize there is a certain amount of posturing in public.

UN Reform

It is the opinion of many that the UN has not fulfilled its early promise. The seminar speakers identified several reasons for this situation, including the following: contradictions inherent in the Charter; the role and selection of the Secretary-General; and the reactive nature of the Security Council. The speakers discussed the current prospects for reform in these areas.

A. Contradictions in the Charter

Mr. Picco and Mr. Jonah believe there are contradictions in the Charter which prevent the UN from achieving its objectives. The contradictions take two forms: philosophical and structural.

Mr. Picco believes the purpose of the Security Council is to establish a system of international relations not based on force or the threat of force. In the Charter, however, there is a tension between the concept of nations cooperating to resolve a conflict without the use of force, and the desire to impose a particular kind of peace. The "imposition of peace" is a contradiction in terms. The whole enforcement concept in the Charter is a contradiction of the Charter itself.

Mr. Picco believes the UN should choose to work on the principle of consensus, tempered with common sense. This implies that all parties to a conflict must be involved in the search for a solution. This requires a change in the concept of power and in the definition of the enemy. Mr. Picco is unsure whether people are ready to make these adjustments and live in a world where there is no enemy--no Hitler, no Mussolini -- and where even a Khomeini accepts the resolutions of the UN. He believes the fundamental challenge facing the UN is to find people who have the courage to be prophets of a "UN revolution" and national leaders who are able to lead a world without enemies.

Mr. Jonah observed that the greatest impediment to action by the Security Council has been the lack of cooperation among the permanent members and their use of the veto. Both the structure of the Security Council and the allocation of the veto are enshrined in the Charter. As Mr. Jonah pointed out, "At the same time as the Charter

gave the Security Council the ability to influence, it took away its ability to act." The prospects for change are not encouraging. The political will does not exist among the permanent members to open up a debate on the Charter.

Mr. Pearson pointed out the kind of problem which would arise if the members attempted to change the composition of the Security Council. What criteria would apply in according a country status as a permanent member of the Security Council? The current permanent members are nuclear weapons states. Does this mean the possession of nuclear weapons should entitle a country to permanent status? What about Japan--a non-nuclear state that ranks number two as a world economic power? Mrs. Bali raised another interesting question. Are countries other than the Big Five prepared to assume the obligations and responsibilities, financial and otherwise, which go along with permanent member status?

Mr. Barton believes that the world got the best organization possible. If the UN were created today, it would not have a Security Council--no member would be willing to abrogate its own sovereignty. It would also be difficult to escape the principle of weighted voting as currently practised in agencies like the World Bank, and a recognition of the relative power of countries as reflected in the Security Council. Mr. Barton added that while the UN does not change its rules, it does change the way in which it deals with the issues. Mrs. Bali remarked that the Charter does not need to be amended; it needs to be applied in both spirit and letter.

Despite the difficulties involved, the non-aligned countries continue to push for structural changes to the Security Council through the Charter Committee. Their proposals have generally met with resistance. On occasion, the Chinese have seen it in their interests to support non-aligned views. Currently, the non-aligned nations are trying to overcome the veto of the permanent members. They are drawing up a code of conduct which exempts certain issues from the use of the veto. Examples are the election of the Secretary-General and the request for peacekeeping forces by two countries at war.

B. The Role of the Secretary-General

In the past, the role of the Secretary-General has been very narrowly defined. The limits of his power have been clearly delineated by the great powers. Mr. Pearson drew upon the case of the Iran-Iraq war to illustrate this point. For eight years, that war raged. A million people were killed and the great powers simply watched and fed arms to both sides. In 1984, the Secretary-General tried to bring about a resolution and met with defeat. This discredited the UN. It was only when the backers on each side decided to call it quits that the Secretary-General was permitted to play a role.

Recently, the office of the Secretary-General has been used more creatively. This has helped to bring about resolutions in several outstanding conflicts including Afghanistan, Namibia and Greece. All of the speakers advocated enhancing the role of the Secretary-General and expanding his potential to conduct "preventive diplomacy."

A key step is to change the process by which the Secretary-General is selected. Mr. Barton believes that, despite the excellent qualifications of the current Secretary-General, the process invites mediocrity. He stated, "Until the permanent members of the Council can be persuaded to join in a search for the best candidate, rather than the one they anticipate will cause them the least amount of trouble, the outlook for the future is not encouraging." Given the renewed commitment to multilateralism demonstrated by the permanent members and, in particular, the superpowers, there may be an opportunity to increase the activism and effectiveness of the Secretary-General.

C. The Reactive Nature of the Security Council

The reactive nature of the Security Council is one of its shortcomings. Mr. Barton illustrated this point. In 1967, prior to the outbreak of hostilities in the Middle East, the Canadians and the Danes demanded a meeting of the Security Council. They attempted to persuade their colleagues to take action to head off the imminent danger of war in the Middle East. He said, "Our efforts were wasted; the debate showed that the political imperatives of the Council members would not permit it to deal with threats to the peace pro-actively. The explosion would have to take place before the Council could contemplate action."

Mr. Barton spoke about a proposal put forth during Canada's last term on the Security Council to encourage a more pro-active posture. Mr. Barton was instructed to explore the idea of informal sessions with the Council members, at the level of Foreign Ministers. They would discuss the world's trouble spots and try to defuse tension. The model that the Canadians were using was the periodic meetings of the Commonwealth Heads of Government where no decisions are taken and any communique is non-controversial. It was an idea whose time had not yet come. However, the USSR has recently resurrected the idea, and both Mr. Green and Mr. Ausman reported a renewed interest in the proposal and the desire among the Canadian delegation to raise it again with the members of the Security Council.

The Mandate of the Security Council

There was discussion about the expansion of the mandate of the Security Council beyond its traditional role into two areas: the domestic politics of countries; and environmental issues.

A participant in Winnipeg observed that political, tribal and religious differences within countries frequently negate the work of the UN in the field of development. Could the Security Council play a role in guaranteeing the successful implementation of development programmes? Mr. Green responded that there is no consensus at present to expand the principle of the maintenance of peace and security to include interference in the domestic issues of a country. He said that there are other forums through which Canada can work to address such matters.

Mr. Jonah said that there is, however, some progress on this front at the UN. He said member states have come to accept the Office for Research and the Collection of Information and its "early warning system." The Office gathers intelligence and conducts analysis on behalf of the Secretary-General, in order to identify potential trouble spots in the world. Mr. Jonah said that if you have a system of early warning, you cannot avoid getting into domestic issues. He said some members are willing to air domestic problems, for example, in the area of human rights. Governments know that it is no longer valid to say, "This is within my own domestic, sovereign area." The members of

the UN are now requesting access to the reports written by Mr. Jonah's office. He is against this development because it will influence what is written. There is, however, some consideration being given to the production of a monthly report based on the information gathered.

One participant asked what prevents the Office of Research from becoming a CIA or a CSIS? Mr. Jonah said that originally there were fears, but assurances have been given that the Office is engaged in intelligence gathering and analysis, not covert operations. The degree of trust among the members was recently demonstrated to Mr. Jonah during a meeting involving the US and the USSR. The two countries proposed his Office be given their raw intelligence data in order to do its job more effectively. In the past, information gathering was never carried out in a systematic manner. Now it is, with the aim of enabling the UN to be more pro-active.

There was discussion regarding whether or not environmental issues would enter the agenda of the Security Council. Mr. Jonah expressed sadness at the experience of the Security Council with respect to the environment. He said the Soviets have proposed a more comprehensive definition of security for deliberation by the Council. On at least three occasions, they have faced negative reactions from the West. The Soviets, therefore, are starting to pull back and accept the Western political doctrine on the issue. The West now believes it has killed the attempt to expand the concept of security.

One participant noted a contradiction between a general acceptance of the notion of security as defined in the Brundtland Commission, and rejection of it by the Council. Mr. Jonah pointed out that the Council is quite happy to have the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) endorse the Commission, but to leave the matter outside of the political domain of the Council. He said the US sees the Soviet proposal towards a more comprehensive definition of security as a plot to change the Charter. In addition, if the Council expands its mandate to include environmental issues, what about human rights, economic rights?

One of the participants raised the point that if the Security Council does not initiate discussion on the environment, events may force the issue upon the Council, and it may lose control of its agenda. Mr. Jonah emphasized that the Security Council does

not control its agenda. In fact, its members are often unhappy when the Africans or others raise certain issues. Members can, however, prevent movement on an issue. They did so in the case of the new economic order and the new information order. Global negotiations have been abandoned because the US would not support them. Mr. Jonah observed that the Secretary-General has realized that he cannot stray too far from the interests of the Big Five because they are paying for much of the Council's work.

Mr. Ignatieff predicted that, even though the US president has tried to choke off the redefinition of common security, his is not the last word. Non-governmental organizations and the media also have a role to play. He pointed to two recent initiatives to illustrate his point. The Pugwash meeting last July in Boston focused attention on the role of the UN and the redefinition of security. Similarly, a Rotary International Forum in Toronto addressed the theme, "Managing Resources for Peace." The Trustees of Rotary wanted businessmen to look at the impact of the environment on debt, economics and the role of the UN. Mr. Ignatieff suggested that the US government position need not be seen as settled.

Canada on the Security Council

This set of seminars focused on Canada's election to the Security Council and Canada's performance since becoming a member.

A. Canada's Election and Role

Canada first announced its candidacy for the Security Council in 1984. At the time, the UN was being denounced for its ineffectiveness and was beset with financial problems. Canada, however, remained committed to the principle of multilateralism embodied by the organization.

Mr. Ausman stated that Canada's campaign for the Security Council was based on the belief that Canada has a great deal to contribute. Canada has an understanding of international issues acquired through previous experience on the Council and involvement in an extensive multilateral network, including the Commonwealth, la francophonie and the Group of Seven. In addition, Canada has a proud tradition of peacekeeping and a

reputation for impartiality. Finally, Mr. Ausman noted that Canada's desire to be on the Council was a little like a politician's instinctive craving for the limelight. It reflected an activist foreign policy. To this list of Canada's credentials, Mr. Green added a longstanding commitment to the UN, even during its financial crisis, and Canada's status as the fourth largest voluntary contributor to the organization.

Canada was elected to the Security Council with 127 votes on the first ballot, far exceeding its expectations. Finland followed on the third ballot with 110 votes to Greece's 47. Attached is a list of the Security Council members.

After the vote, Canada's Ambassador Yves Fortier declared, "It's a massive victory, a vote of confidence in the capacity of our country to continue working for the UN." Once elected, however, Canada was unsure of how to proceed. It was faced with high expectations, among the Canadian press and the public, which could not necessarily be fulfilled. The role of "honest broker," which Canada had envisaged playing in 1984, was no longer available. Canada could not look back to 1978 or even December of 1988 for guidance, because the dynamics of the Council had altered beyond recognition. The superpowers were cooperating. The Big Five were working together as envisaged in the Charter. There were now only four members of the Group of Seven, with Canada being the only non-permanent member. There were seven non-aligned members of the Council instead of six. The permanent members and the non-aligned nations consult among themselves, in their respective caucuses. Canada, Finland and Brazil are largely excluded from both groups, and risk being marginalized.

Mr. Kirsh, Mr. Green and Mr. Ausman gave two illustrations of the role which is now evolving for Canada. The first involved Namibia. There was disagreement between the non-aligned and the permanent members over the size of UNTAG--the UN Transition Advisory Group. The non-aligned members of the Council wanted to maintain the size of the force structure of seven battalions established by Resolution 435, in 1978. The permanent members sought to reduce it to three or four battalions. Canada approached the problem by asking each Council member exactly what tasks needed to be fulfilled, what the threat assessment on each was, and how many UN troops would be needed to accomplish each task. These questions were intended to reinforce the idea that the force should be both effective and cost-efficient. When an impasse was reached in February, Canada reviewed the most difficult issues with the President of the Council

and suggested several ways to narrow the differences. These ideas were also submitted to the Secretary-General. Canada did not claim credit for the final resolution, but many of the ideas which Canada had put forth were contained within it.

Canada played a similar role in an incident involving Afghanistan. The government of Afghanistan alleged that Pakistani regular army units had crossed the border to support the Mujahideen siege of Jalalabad. Afghanistan called upon the Security Council to investigate. Council members initially focused on whether or not the Council should meet and investigate the incident. Some members appeared prepared to support or oppose the Afghan allegation based only on the text of the foreign minister's letter. In bilateral consultations, Canada pointed out to the acting President that the Council must have further information before taking any action. Canada proposed that the Secretary-General be asked whether UNGOMAP--the UN observer force stationed in Kabul and Islamabad--might carry out an investigation. This suggestion deflected a public display of rhetoric, and turned attention away from New York and back to Jalalabad. At the time of the seminars, the UNGOMAP officers had not been allowed to investigate the matter directly. Afghanistan was now claiming only that individual Pakistani soldiers, still on active duty, had infiltrated to assist the Mujahideen. Canada is learning as it goes along and, as Mr. Ausman stated, Canada's priority is simply to do its best to be a "constructive internationalist."

B. Canada's Performance

The seminar participants were concerned about Canada's performance on the Security Council and how Canada is regarded internationally. They were particularly interested in Canada's foreign policy in the Middle East and South Africa. They were also concerned about the extent to which Canada is perceived to be a satellite of the US.

1. The Middle East

When the seminars began, the Canadian government was refusing to grant recognition to the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) at the ambassadorial level. The seminar participants sought an explanation for this policy.

The representatives from the Department of External Affairs stressed that foreign policy is created by the Canadian government, not the UN mission. Furthermore, the mission implements policy and advises the government, but does not comment on the pros and cons of a particular policy. The speakers did, however, try to explain Canadian policy in the Middle East.

Canada acknowledged that the PLO has a role to play in conflict resolution in the Middle East. It does not recognize the PLO as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The principle behind this position was articulated at the la francophonie summit: the Canadian government will not accord self-determination to a people without a territory. If it did so, there would be legal problems and a dangerous precedent would be set. Mr. Green emphasized that Canada has contacts and working discussions with the PLO throughout the Middle East, although not at the ambassadorial level. He said that, in reality, while much had been made about the American recognition of the PLO, US-PLO contacts at the ambassadorial level were limited to Tunisia.

Mr. Green provided some background to the current dispute. He explained that the partition plan in the Middle East calls for two states, and supports the right of Israel to exist within secure and recognized boundaries. The problem is that no Arab country, with the exception of Egypt, accepts the legitimacy of the Israeli state. In the original plan, part of Jordan's territory was included in the proposed Palestinian state. However, discussions on the Palestinian state are focusing on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Mr. Green stated that Canada supports the call for an international peace conference, but not a conference for which the end result is presupposed. Furthermore, Canada has a limited ability to play a decisive role in the Middle East because of its association with the "Western status quo."

In Halifax, Mr. Spencer read a statement from the Prime Minister which said, "We are reviewing our position in regard to the Middle East and the various players there...It doesn't matter if we are first or last but we have a long record in the Middle East and we try to be helpful." By the time the seminar in Montreal took place, the PLO had been granted recognition at the ambassadorial level and the participants did not raise the matter again.

2. South Africa

In each of the seminars, the speakers discussed the issue of apartheid in South Africa. The participants inquired whether or not sanctions have had an impact, and what role Canada is playing in South Africa and the frontline states.

Mr. Jonah stated that the practical impact of sanctions is questionable, but the moral impact of sanctions should not be underestimated. What black Africans dislike is the hypocrisy among the Western countries: the British and Americans claim that sanctions do not work, yet they have applied them for their own purposes in the Falklands and Cuba.

Mr. Barton said that Britain's trade statistics reveal why it won't support sanctions against South Africa; it has too much to lose. He said that Canada's trade with South Africa is so small that support for sanctions is almost an empty gesture. Furthermore, Canada can hardly stand on a platform railing against apartheid considering Canada's treatment of the black minority in this country and native Canadians, especially those living in the North.

Mr. Green said that sanctions are generally applied for a specific purpose and duration; it is more difficult to apply sanctions for a period as indeterminate as "until apartheid ends." He also explained the problems involved in balancing the sanctions against diplomatic efforts to change the system. Canada is not on the best of terms with South Africa; the more we apply sanctions, the less room we have to manoeuvre diplomatically.

Canada works through other channels to help the blacks in South Africa. Canada contributes to the Commonwealth Fund which helps South Africans to publish small papers. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) provides a small sum for speaking tours by South Africans. There are mission-administered funds which are used to assist anti-apartheid groups. This money might be used for such things as printing pamphlets, paying lawyers' fees or allowing a group whose headquarters have been bombed to continue working. Mr. Green briefly touched upon Canada's assistance to the frontline states mentioning non-lethal aid to protect Mozambique's railways. Canada has

also increased the number of positions available in military training programmes for Africans from the frontline states.

3. Relations with the US

The seminar participants were interested in the nature of Canada's reputation abroad and the impact of its close relationship with the United States.

Mr. Green stated that Canada's alliances, and its position among the Western democracies, mean that it will often have views similar to those of the Americans. However, he said, Canada is not in the pocket of the US; Canada's voting record at the UN bears this out. For example, in early 1989, Canada differed from the US on two out of three of the most controversial votes faced by the Council. Mr. Green said that it was unfortunate that the first issue which confronted Canada was the downing of two Libyan aircraft by American jet fighters. Canada voted against the resolution to condemn the action, and accepted the American version of the incident. This gave the perception that Canada would not be an independent voice on the Security Council. The perception changed, however, when Canada abstained on the procedural vote to permit the Palestinian Liberation Organization to address the Security Council. The sense of Canada's independence was strengthened when Canada supported the Council resolution "strongly deplored" Israel's treatment of the Palestinians in the occupied territories. In these two cases, the US cast negative votes.

One participant asked whether the Free Trade Agreement has had an impact on Canada's image. Mr. Green said that the public in the United States has little interest in, or knowledge about, the Free Trade Agreement. The situation is the same at the UN. Both he and Mr. Picco confirmed that there has been no change in the perceptions of Canada held by the international community as a result of the agreement.

Mr. Jonah observed that Canada is well regarded by the international community. In particular, it is respected for its role in peacekeeping. He said, however, there was a period of doubt about Canada at the beginning of the Mulroney government. There was the perception that the prime minister would be in the pocket of the United States. At the time of the US pull-out from The UN Educational, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Secretary-General visited Canada twice. When Canada continued to

support the UN, and did not follow the lead of the Americans in the case of UNESCO, Canadian credibility went up.

Mr. Green emphasized that Canada's close relationship with the United States can be an advantage. Frequent bilateral negotiations between the two countries afford Canada the opportunity to raise issues facing the Security Council and provide the Americans with a different perspective -- for example, on the issues of sanctions in South Africa and peacekeeping in Central America. Canada's views are listened to, and in this manner Canada may be in a position to further the work of the Security Council rather than hinder it.

Agenda of the Security Council

The speakers stressed that the agenda of the Security Council is event-driven, and that many world events cannot be foreseen. They did, however, identify several issues which were likely to appear on the agenda in the next few years.

The Council will be asked to renew the mandate of the UN peacekeeping force in Cyprus. The members will probably face another call for sanctions against South Africa, although not while cooperation is being sought on the matter of independence for Namibia. The issue of a UN role in Central America, similar to that in Namibia, was predicted by the speakers and has since come to pass. Similarly, they raised the possibility of a role for the UN in Cambodia/Kampuchea, a prospect which has recently received mention in the press. The speakers discussed the matter of UN involvement in an international conference on the Middle East. However, Mr. Jonah was skeptical about US agreement to a role for the UN in the Middle East; a broader role for the UN might weaken the influence of the US. Finally, the speakers speculated that the UN may be called upon to supervise a referendum to determine the fate of the Sahrawi of Western Sahara.

Mr. Spencer pointed out that the events listed relate to solutions to current problems. The UN, however, will also deal with crises that cannot be predicted. Mr. Green said that Canada's vote would depend on: the details of the given issue; the circumstances surrounding the issue at the time; the wording of the resolution; the stands taken by various players; and Canada's foreign policy in that area. "What we do

know," he said, "is that we go in with a series of principles and commitments. We ran [for election to the Council] on a certain foreign policy and we will not necessarily change this." He also noted that votes are often based on what is possible, rather than what is desirable. The only other option is divisive debate, empty words and no solution. He said this often displeases people at home, as in the case of the Middle East; however, Canada must try to find the most effective way to deal with the realities. Similarly, Mr. Ausman stated, "Canada cannot decide to pursue progress on just some...issues according to some internal decision of our own priorities. We must participate as fully as we can, or as appropriate, on each of them and bring whatever skills and experience we can to bear on finding a pragmatic, broadly acceptable solution to each. Our priority is, therefore, simply to do our best to be constructive internationalists."

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LIST OF SPEAKERS**Vancouver**

Giandomenico Picco, Director and Assistant to the Secretary-General for Special Assignments, United Nations Secretariat

Graham Green, Political and Public Affairs Officer and Alternate Representative at the Security Council, Department of External Affairs

Winnipeg

James Jonah, Assistant Secretary-General for the Office for Research and the Collection of Information, United Nations

William Barton, Former Canadian Ambassador to the United Nations

Graham Green, Political and Public Affairs Officer and Alternate Representative at the Security Council, Department of External Affairs

Toronto

James Jonah, Assistant Secretary-General for the Office for Research and the Collection of Information, United Nations

George Ignatieff, Former Canadian Ambassador to the United Nations

John Ausman, Deputy Director, United Nations Affairs' Division, Department of External Affairs

Halifax

Geoffrey Pearson, Former Canadian Ambassador to Moscow; Former Director General of the Bureau of United Nations Affairs and Advisor on Disarmament and Arms Control for the Department of External Affairs; former Executive Director, CIIPS

Christopher Spencer, Special Advisor, International Organizations Bureau, Department of External Affairs

Montreal

Neylan Bali, Principal Officer, Office of the Director Security Council and Political Committees Division, Department of Political and Security Council Affairs, United Nations Secretariat

Phillip Kirsch, Deputy Permanent Representative for Canada at the United Nations, and Minister Counsellor, Department of External Affairs

MEMBERS OF THE 1989 SECURITY COUNCIL

	<u>Permanent Members</u>	<u>Non-Permanent members</u>
Africa		Algeria Ethiopia Senegal
Asia	China	Malaysia Nepal
Latin America & Caribbean		Brazil Colombia
East Europe	USSR	Yugoslavia
West Europe & Others	France United Kingdom USA	Canada Finland

Monthly Rotation of the Presidency of the Council

January	-	Malaysia
February	-	Nepal
March	-	Senegal
April	-	Yugoslavia
May	-	USSR
June	-	United Kingdom
July	-	USA
August	-	Algeria
September	-	Brazil
October	-	Canada
November	-	China
December	-	Colombia

Source: "Canada on the UN Security Council 1989-90: Documents and Statements," Department of External Affairs, Ottawa, January 1989.



